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Form 10-300
(Rev. 6-72)UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICENATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

K195

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE:	Washington
COUNTY:	King
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY DATE	

1. NAME	
COMMON:	Bell Apartments
AND/OR HISTORIC:	Austin A. Bell Building

2. LOCATION			
STREET AND NUMBER: 2326 First Avenue			
CITY OR TOWN: Seattle		CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT: #1 - Honorable Joel Pritchard	
STATE Washington	CODE 53	COUNTY: King	CODE 033

3. CLASSIFICATION			
CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Both	<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered
		<input type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress	Yes: <input type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Park <input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) Storage

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY			
OWNER'S NAME: Samuel Israel			
STREET AND NUMBER: 408 Occidental South			
CITY OR TOWN: Seattle	STATE: Washington	98104	CODE 53

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION			
COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.: King County Auditor's Office			
STREET AND NUMBER: County Courthouse			
CITY OR TOWN: Seattle	STATE: Washington		CODE 53

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS			
TITLE OF SURVEY: Municipal Art Commission List of Historic Buildings			
DATE OF SURVEY: 1969 <input type="checkbox"/> Federal <input type="checkbox"/> State <input type="checkbox"/> County <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Local			
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS: Municipal Art Commission			
STREET AND NUMBER: Municipal Building			
CITY OR TOWN: Seattle	STATE: Washington		CODE 53

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE:	Washington
COUNTY:	King
ENTRY NUMBER	
DATE	

FOR NPS USE ONLY

7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (If known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Austin A. Bell Building is a four-story structure of brick with terra cotta ornamentation. Both brick and terra cotta are of a distinctive reddish-orange color and the mortar joints are narrow. It was designed by Elmer Fisher, the architect who would later create many of the buildings in the Pioneer Square District of Seattle. Although Fisher's Pioneer Square designs are strongly Richardsonian, the Bell Building is less so and has some interesting Gothic features as well.

The ground floor served as commercial space and window openings are large. Slender cast iron columns frame the recessed doorway. Wooden decorative panels appear above the transom of the double doors. A single door in an arched entry way at the south end of the building face provides entrance to the floors above. Cast iron columns support the small arch and a decorative wooden panel also appears above the doorway.

Rock faced stone columns on either side of the doorway and store front continue for the first story only and then are extended by brick pilasters to the full height of the building. The brick pilasters above the doorway continue above the fourth story to form a small tower. The tower is flat roofed but this may not have been the original form.

Window openings are deeply recessed. Windows occur in sets of three above the commercial section of the ground floor and in pairs on either side of bordering pilasters. Single windows are placed on each floor above the south doorway. All windows on the second floor are tall and rectangular; the central group of three windows is separated by cast iron columns. The same pattern is repeated on the third and fourth floors although flanking openings on the third floor have segmental pointed arches and the narrow fourth floor window are fully arched. Terra cotta decorations appear above window openings on the second and third floors.

A high parapet extends above the fourth floor and it is composed of a more coarse brick than is the rest of the facade. The pilasters continue through the parapet and the central pilasters extend above it. Between the central pilasters and recessed within a brick equilateral arch is a terra cotta wheel window design flanked at the base by terra cotta fillets filling out the base of the arch.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

8. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- ☐ Pre-Columbian ☐ 16th Century ☐ 18th Century ☒ 20th Century
☐ 15th Century ☐ 17th Century ☒ 19th Century

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) 1889 to present

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal | <input type="checkbox"/> Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Political | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Phi- | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry | losophy | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention | <input type="checkbox"/> Science | _____ |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art | <input type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Human- | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature | itarian | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications | <input type="checkbox"/> Military | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation | <input type="checkbox"/> Music | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation | _____ |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Few buildings have such a close connection with their builders as does the Bell Building. Dominating other structures in the area, one writer has described it as "having the dour, brooding aspect of the unhappy man to whom it was a monument".

Austin Americus Bell was the only son of William N. Bell, one of the founders of the city of Seattle. The elder Bell's landclaim became the community of Belltown, later surrounded and annexed by Seattle. Austin, the second male child born in the pioneer village, began his life in a log cabin about opposite the site of the building which bears his name.

At his father's death in 1887, Austin inherited a portion of the estate which continued to increase in value and he became known as a wealthy man. His business prospered as well as his home and family life, yet he was plagued by feelings of ill health. His father had been ill for years prior to his death and his mental condition had deteriorated as well. Austin thought he saw signs of his father's sickness in himself and traveled extensively seeking to restore his health.

In 1889, he was planning the construction of a new brick building -- the one which now bears his name -- on some of his property to replace an existing wooden structure. During one spring evening, he took a buggy ride with his nephew and discussed his contemplated investment, the success of which was virtually assured. The following morning, he went to his office and locked the doors behind him. He then drew out a revolver and shot himself in the temple. He left a letter to his wife, telling her that he did not consider life with poor health worth living. Mrs. Eva Bell completed the building in her husband's honor, placing upon it his name.

The Bell Building is significant also as an example of the work of architect Elmer Fisher, who designed many of the structures in the Pioneer Square Historic District. Scots-born Fisher studied architecture in Massachusetts, practiced in Minnesota and Colorado and designed many buildings in Victoria, B.C., before moving to Seattle in 1888. He remained in the Seattle area after the major fire of 1889, and is credited with the design of some 54 structures as the city rebuilt. His extant buildings are this outstanding architect's only monument, for virtually no information about the man is now available.

Form 10-300a
(July 1969)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet)

STATE	
Washington	
COUNTY	
King	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

(Number all entries)

#8 - Significance
Bell Apartments

The Bell Building is significant as a structure of post-fire architecture, as a monument to a man important in the development of the city and as a valuable example of the work of a locally prominent architect.

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Bagley, Clarence B., History of Seattle. Chicago, S. J. Clarke Publishing Co., 1916.
 Chisom, Charles B., The Bell Building, paper for arch. course, 1962.
 Kelly, James, The Bell Building, paper for Architecture course, University of Washington, 1966, in Architecture Library.
 Korbein, J.R., The Bell Building, paper for arch. course, 1964.
 McDonald, Lucile. "Monument to an Unhappy Man," Seattle Times, May 14, 1967.

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			OR	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds
NW	° ' "	° ' "		N47° 36' 50"	W122° 20' 45"	
NE	° ' "	° ' "				
SE	° ' "	° ' "				
SW	° ' "	° ' "				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: Less than one

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE: Margaret A. Corley, King County Liaison

ORGANIZATION: Seattle Historical Society DATE: June, 1969

STREET AND NUMBER: 2161 East Hamlin Street

CITY OR TOWN: Seattle STATE: Washington CODE: 53

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National ☐ State ☐ Local ☒

Name Charles H. Odegaard

Title Director - Washington State Parks & Recreation Commission

Date March 7, 1974

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

 Director, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date _____

ATTEST:

 Keeper of The National Register

Date _____

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

PROPERTY MAP FORM

(Type all entries - attach to or enclose with map)

STATE Washington	
COUNTY King	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

1. NAME			
COMMON: Bell Apartments			
AND/OR HISTORIC: Austin A. Bell			
2. LOCATION			
STREET AND NUMBER: 2326 First Avenue			
CITY OR TOWN: Seattle			
STATE: Washington	CODE 53	COUNTY: King	CODE 53
3. MAP REFERENCE			
SOURCE: Standard Oil of California			
SCALE: one inch equals ca. 0.29 miles			
DATE: 1970			
4. REQUIREMENTS			
TO BE INCLUDED ON ALL MAPS			
1. Property boundaries where required.			
2. North arrow.			
3. Latitude and longitude reference.			

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

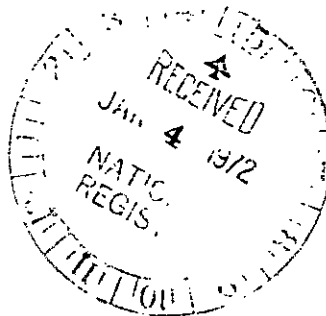
PROPERTY MAP FORM

(Type all entries - attach to or enclose with map)

STATE	
Washington	
COUNTY	
King	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

1. NAME			
COMMON: Bell Apartments			
AND/OR HISTORIC: Austin A. Bell			
2. LOCATION			
STREET AND NUMBER:			
2326 First Avenue			
CITY OR TOWN:			
Seattle, 98121			
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
Washington	53	King	53
3. MAP REFERENCE			
SOURCE:			
USGS 7.5 Seattle South quadrangle			
SCALE: 1:24000			
DATE: 1949			
4. REQUIREMENTS			
TO BE INCLUDED ON ALL MAPS			
1. Property boundaries where required.			
2. North arrow.			
3. Latitude and longitude reference.			



1533 MI NW
(SHILSHOLE BAY)

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

122° 20' 45"

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

122° 22' 30"
47° 37' 30"

548900m E. R. 3 E. R. 4 E.

EVERETT 27 MI.
EDMONDS 14 MI.

EVERETT 27 MI.
MOUNTLAKE TERRACE 15 MI.
20'

51
151
SEATTLE

5274000m N.

BM
13

47° 36' 50"

Seattle South
7.5 min.
1949

5273

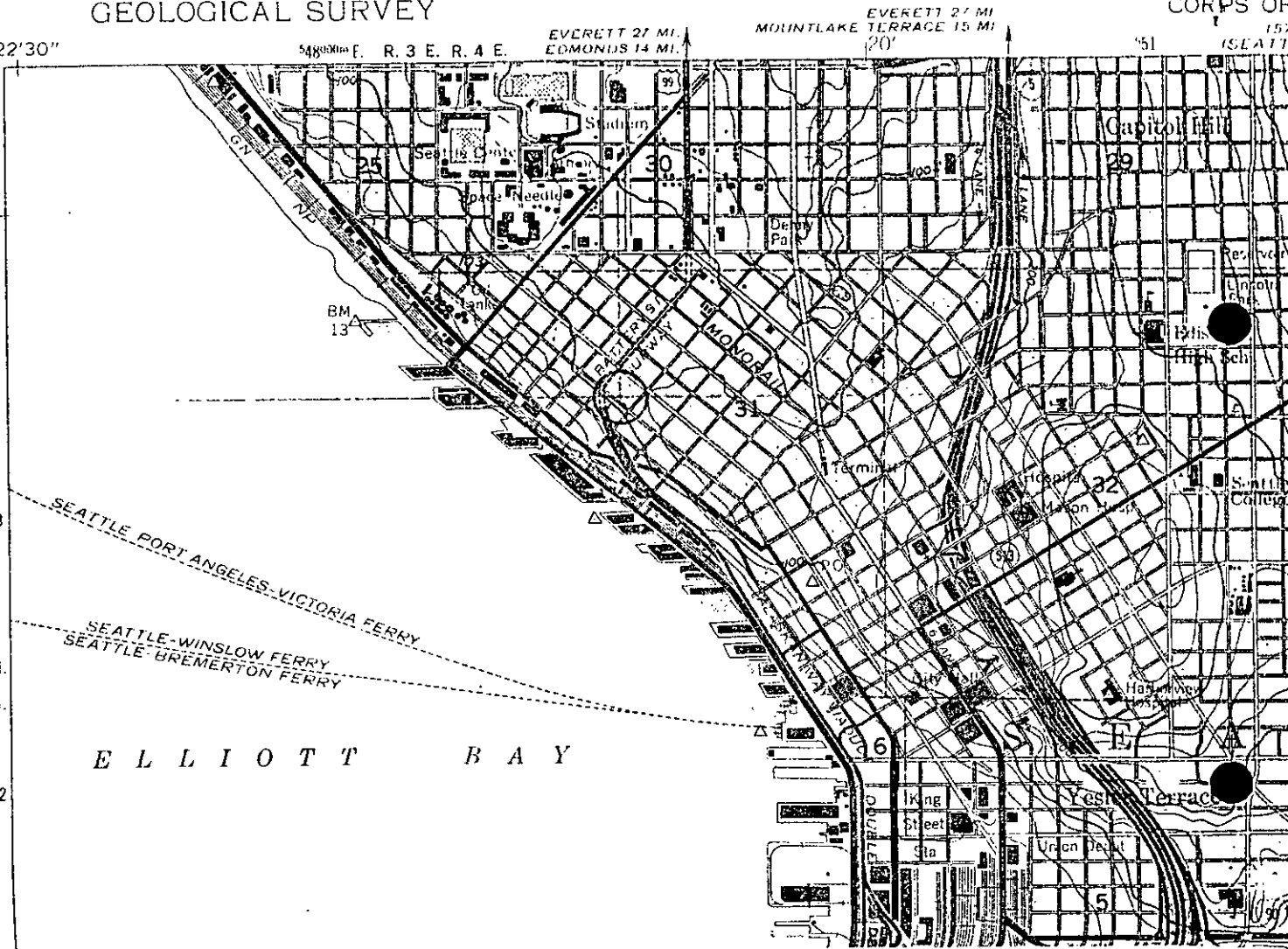
SEATTLE PORT ANGELES-VICTORIA FERRY
SEATTLE-WINSLOW FERRY
SEATTLE-BREMERTON FERRY

T. 25 N.

T. 24 N.

5272

ELLIOTT BAY



SEE INSTRUCTIONS

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICENATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
PROPERTY PHOTOGRAPH FORM

(Type all entries - attach to or enclose with photograph)

STATE Washington	
COUNTY King	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

1. NAME			
COMMON: Bell Apartments			
AND/OR HISTORIC: Austin A. Bell			
2. LOCATION			
STREET AND NUMBER: 2326 First Avenue			
CITY OR TOWN: Seattle			
STATE: Washington	CODE 53	COUNTY: King	CODE 53
3. PHOTO REFERENCE			
PHOTO CREDIT: Werner Lenggenhager			
DATE OF PHOTO: 1950's			
NEGATIVE FILED AT: Lenggenhager, 1631 Belmont, Seattle			
4. IDENTIFICATION			
DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC. View east of the west facade, (front). Part of building to right also showing.			



WASH. HISTORY MUSEUM
STATE LIBRARY

BIOG. BELL, AUSTIN A.

The Cover

Monument To An Unhappy Man

By LUCILE McDONALD

WHEN Harry Bonath painted the old Austin A. Bell Building at 2326 First Ave. for today's cover, he revived memories of the tragic story of the man for whom the structure was named.

Austin Americus Bell was the only son of William N. Bell, one of the city's founders, a member of the party landing at Alki on November 13, 1851, from the schooner Exact. His land claim, adjacent to those of the Dennys and Borens, became the separate community of Belltown, later surrounded and annexed by Seattle. Austin, the second male white child born here, started his life in a log cabin about opposite the site of the four-story brick building in the painting.

The cabin was burned in 1856 during an Indian attack on the settlement. The father, having proved up on his land, had enough of troubles with Indians and with trying to farm where he first had to chop down a forest. He moved to California, returning in 1870 after his wife's death. In the meantime, the property had become valuable and he made substantial improvements on it, erecting, among other buildings, the Bellevue Hotel at Battery Street and First Avenue (it was Front Street in those days).

William Bell died September 8, 1887, at the age of 70, leaving an estate valued at \$400,000. Austin inherited a quarter share. The property and buildings continued to increase in worth and Austin was regarded as one of Seattle's wealthy citizens. He had been married six years, had a substantial home, good business, social and family connections and should have been a happy man, were it not for being haunted with ill health. His father had been ill the last six years of his life and his mental condition had deteriorated toward the end. Austin, never robust, thought he saw signs of his father's sickness in himself.

When the younger man returned to Seattle, he had been a printer. Between April, 1875, and September, 1878, he was half owner of The Puget Sound Daily Dispatch and did some

of its editorial work. After selling his share of the paper, he spent most of 10 years traveling and seeking to restore his health. He maintained a real-estate office, moving it in 1889 from the Opera House to 2222 Front (First) Ave. on some of the Bell-family property. He was planning to erect a new brick building next to the Bellevue Hotel to replace a large wooden structure.

The night of April 23, he went for a buggy ride with his nephew and discussed his contemplated investment. Next morning, the world apparently did not look so rosy. He suffered from indigestion and other complications. Perhaps his breakfast did not agree with him.

He went to his office as usual, but locked the doors behind him, entered the inner chamber of his three-room suite and wrote a letter to his wife. Then he drew out a revolver and shot himself in the temple.

A next-door merchant heard the shot and rushed across the street to tell a druggist he thought a murder had been committed. They looked through Bell's windows and saw evidence of trouble, but were unable to enter and investigate. Someone summoned a doctor and others broke in the door. Bell was found on the floor with the weapon under his right hand.

The letter he had left informed his wife that Bell did not consider life with poor health worth living and expressed sorrow that he must take this way out.

Mrs. Eva Bell completed the building as a memorial to her husband and placed on it his name and the date, 1889. Elmer H. Fisher was the architect.

The structure, costing \$50,000, was hailed as one of the showiest in the city. The exterior was of pressed brick, dressed stone and terra cotta, with more than the usual amount of plate glass. Two store spaces were on the ground floor and 63 apartments above. It is still a conspicuous edifice, rising higher than the buildings around it, and having the dour, brooding aspect of the unhappy man to whom it was a monument.